

## Joel Roberts Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, October 28, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>JOEL R. POINSETT TO JACKSON.

The Homestead, Greenville, S. C. , October 28, 1844.

My dear sir, I beg leave to call your attention to the accompanying newspaper containing an extract from a speech delivered by Mr. James Smith Rhett 1 of this state at Macon in Georgia.

1 Robert Barnwell Rhett (1800–1876) bore originally, and until 1837, the name of James Smith.

It is painful to me to be obliged to recur to the events of that epoch to which Mr. Rhett alludes, but they belong to the history of the times, and however much we may deprecate the causes which gave rise to them, the feelings and determinations entertained by the men who took an active part in those scenes of civil strife ought not to be misunderstood, even if they should be obnoxious to the censure of impartial posterity.

In his published speech Mr. Rhett states “He was directed to tell you, that whilst we were anxious to do our duty to the Union, no union man could commit treason against the state, and that if you intended to coerce the state, you must make your arrangements with that understanding.”

The relation I bore to the Union party in South Carolina at that period renders it incumbent upon me to declare, that such was not my understanding of their sentiments and intentions in that dark hour. If I understood them aright the union party did not regard resistance to

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the nullification as treason to the state, and I believed them to be determined not to submit to its practical application and prepared to aid in vindicating the constitution and laws of the country whenever called upon to do so.

I am very unwilling to trespass upon your valuable time or to ask of you any unnecessary exertion; but if you can reply to this without too much inconvenience and if these transactions have not wholly passed from your recollection I should be happy to learn, whether the statement made by Mr. Rhett produced a different impression on your mind at that time. This gentleman was introduced to you by me under the name James R. Smith, The famiy having since changed it&apos;s name to that of Rhett.